



## New funding for stroke research

### **Eight new networks launched to support research into causes and treatment of stroke**

More input from patients into stroke research is just one of the benefits from eight new networks launched today (25 May).

The UK Clinical Research Network and the Department of Health in England are pleased to announce the appointment of eight new Local Research Networks that will support the delivery and conduct of clinical stroke research.

The new English networks are based in the following regions:

- West Midlands (North Staffordshire NHS Trust, led by Dr Christine Roffe)
- South West Peninsula (Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, led by Dr Martin James)
- Yorkshire (Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, led by Dr Anne Forster)
- Trent (University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, led by Dr Tom Robinson)
- North East (City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, led by Professor Chris Gray)
- North West (Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust, led by Dr Pippa Tyrell)
- South East (St George's Health NHS Trust, led by Professor Hugh Markus)
- Thames area (North London, Essex and Oxfordshire). (University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, led by Professor Martin Brown)

Each network will be tasked with increasing patient participation in stroke research as well as supporting workforce development, open and transparent communication and public involvement.

Funding of **£300 - £400k** will be provided to each network annually to employ dedicated research nurses and similar staff that will support clinical teams in hospitals, GP practices and the community to facilitate involvement in stroke clinical studies. Networks will work collaboratively, under the guidance of the Stroke Research Network Coordinating Centre, to use this funding to its full effect, and will be encouraged to build on any existing links with clinical and research support services in their local areas.

Professor Roger Boyle, National Director for Stroke, said:

"I really welcome this announcement. Stroke has not been well represented in the research agenda up until now. The new networks will be major enablers in developing stroke research and will be influential in driving up standards of care for the whole country."

Joe Korner, Communications Director of The Stroke Association said:

"There is a desperate need for more research into stroke, the UK's third biggest killer and leading cause of adult disability.

The new Local topic-specific Research Networks will play a vital role in taking forward this vital research and in encouraging the involvement of stroke survivors.

We look forward to working closely with the Stroke Research Network and the local networks to make sure that the research we fund works for the benefit of everyone touched by stroke”.

Professor Gary Ford Director of the Stroke Research Network and Consultant Stroke Physician in Newcastle supports this view:

“The establishment of the Local Research Networks is a major milestone in supporting much needed research in stroke that will make a difference to stroke patients and their carers. The network will take major advances in stroke treatment developed in the laboratory to the patient’s bedside and also ensure the perspective of stroke patients and their carers guides future research”.

The establishment of the new Local Research Networks marks the next stage of development in the Government’s **£100 million** initiative to transform the clinical research environment in the UK. This was reinforced by the recent launch of the NHS R&D Strategy, “*Best Research for Best Health*”, which placed the creation of research networks at its core and confirmed the importance of clinical research as a vital component in the development of more effective health care.

Andy Burnham, MP, Minister of State for Delivery and Quality, said:

"The requirement to conduct research for the improvement of health and medical treatments was one of the founding principles of the National Health Service. The NHS has a key role to play in determining the future health and wealth of this country, and the Government is determined to harness its capacity to make the UK the best place in the world for health research.

These new Local Research Networks will play a pivotal role in creating a health research system that boasts outstanding individuals, world-class facilities and leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public."

The new Local Research Networks will now begin work to facilitate patient recruitment onto a range of high quality clinical studies.

They will also work closely with their counterparts in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales to support the creation of a UK-wide clinical research infrastructure for stroke research.

In Scotland, stroke is one of three identified priority areas and the development of a Scottish network is being led by Professor Peter Langhorne.

In Northern Ireland, stroke research will be supported as part of the Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network.

In Wales, stroke is one of the priority areas within the Older People and Ageing Research Network (OPAN). OPAN is led by Professor Judith Phillips and Dr. Susan Lambert of University of Wales Swansea.

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**Further information:**

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## **Notes for editors**

1. The UK Clinical Research Network was established in February 2005 to lead the development of a UK-wide infrastructure to support clinical research in the NHS. More information on the UK Clinical Research Network is available at [www.ukcrn.org.uk](http://www.ukcrn.org.uk)
2. The Stroke Research Network was created as part of the UKCRN to support clinical stroke research. More information on the Stroke Research Network is available at [www.uksrn.ac.uk](http://www.uksrn.ac.uk)
3. The UKCRN is working with each of the Topic-Specific Research Networks to develop a high quality and balanced portfolio of clinical research studies. Clinical Studies Groups have been established in each network to oversee this development process. Membership of the groups will include experts in a range of areas associated with each topic.
4. More information on the NHS R&D Strategy, "Best Research for Best Health" is available at [www.dh.gov.uk/researchstrategy](http://www.dh.gov.uk/researchstrategy)